

Inspection of Cannon Hill Girls School

Formerly Balsall Heath Women's Centre, Edward Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham,
West Midlands B12 9LB

Inspection dates: 26–28 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent
school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have not made sure that all of the independent school standards are met. During this inspection, leaders were unwilling to cooperate with inspectors. They prevented inspectors from collecting the full range of evidence that was needed to inform the inspection.

A carefully planned curriculum helps to ensure that learning in English and mathematics is strong for key stage 3 pupils. However, the work set for pupils does not develop their understanding in enough depth in other subjects. Consequently, pupils do not do well in those subjects.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that they feel safe and well looked after. Pupils respect the views of other pupils. They listen to adults and are welcoming of visitors. They are proud of their school.

Behaviour in the school is calm and friendly. Pupils get along well with one another. The school does not tolerate bullying. Pupils enjoy a range of visits to help them learn about different roles in society.

Relationships in school are positive. Teachers know pupils well. There is a strong ethos of taking ownership of learning. This is valued by all staff and pupils. Pupils work hard and are interested in their studies.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The key stage 3 curriculum for English and mathematics is logically sequenced. Teachers plan lessons that consider what pupils already know. There are many opportunities to revisit aspects of learning to make sure pupils develop secure knowledge and skills. Pupils achieve well in English. The curriculum includes opportunities to read extracts from different types of books by a range of authors. Learning is planned well so that pupils can develop their skills. They learn to analyse texts, draw comparisons and make valid hypotheses based on evidence. Their work in books shows improvements in writing skills over time. They write confidently and fluently using sophisticated language. Pupils studying 'The Merchant of Venice' know the text well. They can deconstruct the plot and consider the impact of alternative endings for the main characters. This shows strong engagement and understanding.

In mathematics, teachers have carefully thought about what pupils need to learn. They make sure pupils recap and review knowledge. This means pupils learn more and remember more over time because learning is well sequenced. Pupils can confidently solve problems and explain how they did it. They develop strong mathematical skills so that they can solve more complex problems.

While the curriculum planning in key stage 3 humanities considers key aspects of the national curriculum, the work set for pupils does not sufficiently develop nor deepen their historical or geographical knowledge and understanding. An example

of this is in key stage 3 history where pupils were asked to analyse why King Henry VIII had so many wives. The activity required pupils to merely list the names of the wives, the dates of the marriages and what happened to the wives. This did not develop pupils' analytical skills nor their understanding of the political and diplomatic issues of the day. It does not go beyond listing facts. This approach limits pupils' learning and means they are unable to apply critical skills and to deepen their understanding. Pupils' knowledge does not progressively build over time. Pupils' learning is hindered as a consequence.

School leaders withheld information about the wider curriculum. Inspectors could not confirm that pupils have access to a wide and rich range of educational experiences. Inspectors were prevented from gathering the full range of information about teaching that they needed. Inspectors were unable to consider the quality of education in subjects across the curriculum. Therefore, inspectors could not be confident that all pupils had the opportunity to learn and make progress in a full range of subjects. They did not have the evidence to determine whether the wider curriculum meets the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. Inspectors were unable to talk to pupils about careers education. The school presented a generic scheme for careers education. It was not possible to determine if the guidance offered to pupils was impartial. The curriculum plans for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education suggested that pupils are taught about relationships and keeping healthy. Leaders would not allow inspectors to see pupils' work or meet with pupils to talk about the school's provision other than at the very beginning of the inspection. This lack of access to pupils' views and work means that several independent school standards are not met.

Teachers expect good behaviour. Pupils behave well over time. They arrive on time for lessons and they are ready to learn. In the lessons visited, pupils' positive behaviour helped them to learn more and understand more. Pupils participate well in discussions. They respect and value the opinions of others.

Leaders' work to support pupils who fall behind is weak. Currently, pupils are expected to repeat work that they have not understood as homework. The school plans to hold out-of-school sessions to help pupils. This is not yet happening. As a result, these pupils are not getting the help they need to develop their skills.

Leaders have worked hard to link the principles of Islam to fundamental British values. A small group of pupils whom inspectors were able to talk to could explain how these values help them to contribute to society as young Muslim women. There is a strong focus on character-building through spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils focus on a different character strength every week such as generosity, honesty and integrity. It was not possible to talk to enough pupils to fully investigate if the school complies with the independent school standards linked to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. For example, the school's plans for PSHE education cover protected characteristics. However, it was not possible for inspectors to check if what was planned is delivered effectively.

Leaders provide a range of information for the trustee body. Leaders have identified that the current trustees lack the knowledge needed to challenge appropriately. This is evident as the school was operating outside of its registration at the time of inspection. The board has not made sufficient checks on the quality of education. Leaders and the proprietor need to take swift action to make sure all of the independent school standards are met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead and deputy take their responsibilities seriously and know what to do if there are concerns about a child. Staff complete appropriate training. They can recognise the signs of abuse and neglect. They are aware of the statutory duties in relation to female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty. Pupils are supervised well throughout the school day. There is a high level of vigilance. The small number of pupils who spoke with the inspector said they feel safe at school, which reflects the wider evidence gathered by inspectors. The school's single central record meets requirements. The school's suitable safeguarding policy is available to parents.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- The humanities curriculum at key stage 3 lacks ambition. This means that the work set does not sufficiently challenge pupils. They do not develop their knowledge and understanding because of poorly planned tasks. Pupils do not do well as a result. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum is more aspirational and that learning activities reflect the demands of the curriculum.
- The provision for pupils who require additional support needs attention. Current arrangements are not sufficient to ensure that pupils who fall behind are able to catch up. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum meets the needs and aptitudes of all pupils. Leaders need to ensure that pupils who fall behind can access meaningful interventions. Pupils' learning should not be placed at a disadvantage if they are unable to attend after-school classes due to family circumstances.
- Leaders provide a range of information to the governing body. Leaders recognise that trustees lack the skills and experience to hold the school to account fully. Inspectors were not permitted to meet with any trustees or representatives of the charitable trust that acts as the proprietor. Trustees need further guidance and training to hold leaders to account effectively. They need a better understanding of the independent school standards to ensure the school is fully compliant and operating within its registration.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	145186
DfE registration number	330/6035
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10052720
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	9 to 12
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Highgate Academy
Chair	Gulam Rabbani
Principal	Talal Hussain
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,000
Telephone number	0121 293 9103
Website	www.cannonhillgls.org.uk
Email address	admin@cannonhillsgls.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Cannon Hill Girls School is an independent Muslim day school for girls. It opened in February 2018. The school is registered for 100 pupils aged nine to 12. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- At the time of this inspection, the school was operating outside of its registration. Several pupils over the age of 12 were in attendance at the school.
- There are no pupils on roll who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils have an education, health care (EHC) plan.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a material change to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school would meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002. The outcome of this inspection is: The school is unlikely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented. The material change has already been implemented ahead of receiving approval.

- Inspectors found that the school does not have a curriculum in place for key stage 2, or any provision for primary-aged pupils. The Department for Education asked inspectors to consider whether the school would be able to admit pupils aged 11 to 16. Given the number of unmet school standards identified, it is unlikely that the school will meet all standards if the material change is granted.
- During the inspection, several key documents were withheld from inspectors by the leadership team. Inspection activities were not permitted to continue after the second on-site day of the inspection. On the third on site day, the principal obstructed the inspection. Leaders were unwilling to cooperate with inspectors. Judgments were made based on the evidence inspectors were able to secure.
- The school's website, social media links and own documentation refer to the school as 'Cannon Hill Girls School and Sixth Form'. A large banner outside the premises also advertises this. The website refers to a sixth-form curriculum. Leaders stated that this was to gauge if there was an interest in post-16 places. The school stated there had been no uptake of this provision, so it no longer intended to offer this. Leaders told inspectors that there was no post-16 curriculum in place.
- The inspection team met with the principal and the head of school throughout the inspection. Inspectors also met with several teaching staff. Inspectors also considered responses of pupils and staff who completed Ofsted's surveys.
- Inspectors were not permitted to contact the proprietor, or any trustees.
- Inspectors looked at the quality of the curriculum, particularly in mathematics, English, history and geography. Inspectors were not permitted to look beyond this to secure a view of the wider curriculum.

- The lead inspector had a brief conversation with a very small number of pupils about their work in mathematics. These pupils also shared their views on pupils' behaviour, safeguarding, bullying and general school experiences.
- Inspectors examined a range of available documentation including policies on the curriculum, complaints, behaviour, safeguarding and bullying. Inspectors scrutinised relevant documentation relating to health, safety and welfare of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and examined the school's safeguarding documentation.
- The views of parents were considered. A small number of parents responded to Ofsted's Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Janet Satchwell Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
 - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education
 - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which–
 - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school’s aim and ethos; and
 - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act[9];
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that–
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught

- 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils’ work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school’s own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor–
- 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
 - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which–
 - 5(b)(i) enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
 - 5(b)(ii) enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
 - 5(b)(iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely
 - 5(b)(iv) enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England

- 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures
- 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act; and
- 5(b)(vii) encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England
- 5(c) precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school; and
- 5(d) takes such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils–
 - 5(d)(i) while they are in attendance at the school,
 - 5(d)(ii) while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school, or
 - 5(d)(iii) in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 32(1)(g) any information reasonably requested in connection with an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act which is required for the purposes of the inspection is provided to the body conducting the inspection and that body is given access to the school’s admission and attendance registers.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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